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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, June 23, 2008)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Grant, O God, that our lawmakers may move forward today as those who are heirs of eternal life. Give them the wisdom to learn contentment with Your purposes, enabling them to experience the eternal here and now. As they move through this day with its shades and shadows, give them freedom—not from difficulties but strength for the challenges that greet them. As they encounter setbacks, may they trust the unfolding of Your loving providence. In the face of misfortunes, empower them to surrender to Your will. Lord, give them the humility to be more concerned about being on Your side than recruiting You to be on their side.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 24, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have a very busy schedule this week. We have some work we need to complete. We have, of course, FISA, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act; we have the supplemental appropriations bill; we have the tax extenders; we have Medicare we need to complete; and, of course, we are on housing today. Regarding that, following any remarks I make and those of the Republican leader, we will return to the House message to accompany H.R. 3221, the housing reform legislation. There will be up to an hour of debate equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees prior to a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Dodd-Shelby substitute with respect to the housing reform bill. Senators have until 10:30 a.m. today to file amendments to the Dodd-Shelby substitute.

By virtue of the previous order, the Senate will be in recess from 12:30 until 2:15 today for our weekly business luncheons.

Mr. President, let me say a couple of other things. We are going to do a

number of judges this afternoon, the exact number of which we don't have worked out just yet, but we are going to do three circuit court judges and some district court judges. I have to confer with Senator LEAHY on the number of district court judges.

I would also say to my friend the distinguished Republican leader that I spoke to Senator FEINGOLD this morning regarding the FEC nominations, and it appears very clear we should be able to do them today. In regard to that, I wish to underscore my desire—our desire—to constitute the Federal Election Commission so it is working.

Just a brief history, Mr. President. Before Memorial Day, there were four FEC nominations pending—two Republicans, two Democrats. At that time, we offered to confirm those nominees by unanimous consent. The Republicans did not take me up on that offer. There would have been five FEC Commissioners today had that been done. In fact, it would have been prior to that recess. There would have been enough to conduct all official business. There was a thought, I assume, on the part of the Republicans that they wanted a full six, and I understand that. So they rejected the offer I made. They wanted to wait until a replacement for the failed nomination of Hans von Spakovsky was received in the Senate. I told the Republicans in December that von Spakovsky would not be approved by this body. Someone should have been cleared to replace him long before now. Nonetheless, I pledged to swiftly move that new nominee, and we have done that. I implored my Republican colleagues to confirm the four who were ready to go so there would be five to restore the agency so it would be workable. That offer was not accepted. The new nominee has now been nominated, and we have waived both the hearing and the markup to speed this up. That makes good

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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